United Nations CEDAW/C/THA/Q/6-7/Add.1

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Distr.: General
24 April 2017

Original: English

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
Sixty-seventh session
3-21 July 2017
Item 4 of the provisional agenda
Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

List of issues and questions in relation to the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of Thailand

Addendum

Replies of Thailand*

[Date received: 3 April 2017]

Note: The present document is being issued in English, French and Spanish only.
* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

17-06522 (E) 280417

Please recycle

Question 1

1. Article 27 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand B.E. 2559 (2016) stipulates against discrimination on various grounds including gender discrimination. It guarantees equal rights for women and men and stresses that persons are equal before laws and shall enjoy equal protection under the law.

2. Furthermore, Thailand's Gender Equality Act B.E. 2558 (2015), which was adopted on 9 September 2015, aims to promote gender equality in various aspects including social, economic and political rights. It also prohibits gender discrimination, which includes any act or omission of the act which causes division, discrimination, or limitation of any rights and benefits, either directly or indirectly without any justification due to the fact of being male or female or of a different appearance from his/her own sex by birth. This is in line with article 1 and 2, paragraph b, of the Convention.

3. Both the Constitution and the Gender Equality Act do apply in the Southern Border Provinces. [*Nonetheless, In the area where a state of emergency is declared, the Emergency Decree on Public Administration in State of Emergency B.E. 2548 (2005) contains certain provisions giving rise to the restriction of personal rights and liberties so permit by means of the legal provisions. This restriction of rights and liberties is imposed for the purpose determined by this Constitution and only to the extent of necessity and provided that it shall not affect the essential substances of such rights and liberties. It shall be of general application and shall not be intended to apply to any particular case or person.*]

4. As CEDAW cannot be applied as law in Thailand, the Gender Equality Act B.E. 2558 (2015) has been drafted, with the mechanism and process to enable petitions in the case of discrimination. The act also includes details of the committee to receive petitions, the process of consideration and remedies.

5. The differential treatment according to article 17 of the Gender Equality Act, "procedures or actions to reduce obstacles or promote equal rights and liberty, or to ensure safety, enable religious practices or for the national security, shall not be considered as gender discrimination, is the condition that has been included in the law to provide flexibility in the case of necessity i.e. for safety or to prevent possible negative effects. The condition may be questioned or repealed by sending petition to the committee under this act.

Question 2

6. Victims of trafficking are able to be compensated through 4 channels: (1) the Anti-Human Trafficking Fund, (2) the Labor Compensation, (3) the Compensation of Injured Person, and (4) the Compensation in accordance with Section 35 of the Anti-Human Trafficking Act (B.E. 2551). It should be highlighted that any person who is identified as victims of trafficking are automatically compensated through the Anti-Human Trafficking Fund. In addition, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS) is exploring the possibility of granting a daily financial support of approximately 300 THB (8.6 USD) per day to victims who are unable to work inside the MSDHS shelters.

7. Legal aid is provided for each victim of trafficking throughout the entire judicial process, as well as the assignment of lawyers and social workers in cases involving the interviewing of children. In the Ranong and Songkhla Welfare Protection of Victims Trafficking Center, the mock up courtroom remains crucial for both adult and child victims to familiarize themselves with court norms, procedures, and expectations. Feedback of the victim/witness support program suggests that victims feel less anxious with court norms, procedures, and expectations, which

have made the trial more efficient. A video conference system has been implemented inside the MSDHS shelters to conduct witness examination for child trafficking victims.

8. The Senate Committee on Social Development and Child, Youth, Women, Senior Citizens, Disables and Vulnerable groups, together with the MSDHS, has a plan to organize a series of workshops to promote awareness about the Gender Equality Act B.E. 2558 (2015)*[, as well as the Convention,]* in all regions of Thailand. The workshops aim to enhance knowledge and understanding among local authorities, competent officers, civil society and people. Two workshops have already been organized in the northern and northeastern regions, and three more workshops are schedule to take place in the upcoming months. Additionally, the MSDHS has published relevant information on preventing trafficking, and the Department of Employment (DOE) has conducted several training programs to increase the understanding of the dangers of trafficking in persons.

Question 3

9. The Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development (OWAFD) has been upgraded into the Department of Women's Affairs and Family Development (DWF). The DWF is in charge of implementing policies and activities to promote women empowerment and gender equality.

10. The Office of Women and Family's Affairs (Department of Women's Affairs and Family Development) has been allocated relatively more budget each year to implement policies to promote women's development and promote gender equality as in the following table:

Fiscal year (B.E.)	*Total Budget (Thai Baht)*
2556 (2013)	241 499 000
2557 (2014)	333 528 900
2558 (2015)	366 329 700
2559 (2016)	759 992 500
2560 (2017)	720 950 800

11. The number of officials of the OWAFD has also increased from 249 persons in the year 2015 to 718 persons in the year 2017.

12. The OWAFD has authority and mandate (1) to enhance, support and coordinate with relevant government agencies and private sector on policies and strategies related to women development, and (2) to research, study and analyse data and situation of women in order to produce reports for the National Commission on Policy and Strategy for the Improvement of the Status of Women. *(Information from the Office of the Prime Minister's Regulation on National Promotion and Coordination on Women's Affairs B.E. 2551)*

13. The Women's Development Plan in the eleventh Economic and Social Development Plan (2012-2016) (WDP/11th National Economic and Social Development Plan — NESDP) embraces the principles of human rights including women's rights as enshrined in the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The WDP/11th NESDP consists of 5 main strategies:

(a) "Promoting a respect of human rights and gender equality" which is in conformity with CEDAW Article 5;

(b) "Advancing women's potential and increasing women's social and economic opportunities" which is in conformity with CEDAW Article 3, 10, 11, 15 and 16;

(c) "Developing women's heath, well-being, and human security" which is in conformity with CEDAW Article 5 and 12;

(d) "Maximizing women's opportunities in political participation and decision making" which is in conformity with CEDAW Article and 7 and 8;

(e) "Strengthening women's mechanisms and organizations at all levels" which is in conformity with CEDAW Article 2 and 4.

14. The WDP/11th NESDP highlights the need for monitoring and evaluation mechanism at both national and local levels and/or a mid-term plan adjustment as appropriate.

Question 4

15. Thailand has been trying to promote the balance of male and female ration in political participation, especially at the local administration. Regrettably, the proposal to include a provision in the Draft Tambon Council and Tambon Administrative Organisation Act requiring the membership ration in the Tambon (district) Administrative Organisation to be 1:1 for women and men faced raised many questions including the issue of reverse discrimination and differential treatment based on gender. The proposal, therefore, was not accepted.

16. However, the article 90 in the new draft of constitution, which passed the referendum in August 2016, has indicated that the process of making of party list for national election of each political party must be an open process that enable participation from all members of the political party, as well as must considered equal chances for members from different regions and gender equality.

Question 5

17. The Ministry of Education has reviewed student books and curriculums and has determined the following actions:

(a) Incorporate gender equality in teacher training curriculums;

(b) Promote women to participate in sports and activities to promote their potentiality;

(c) Review all books as to prevent the inclusion of details or pictures that promote or imply gender discrimination;

(d) Promote teaching of subjects or contents that promote gender equality in the Faculty of Education;

(e) Promote gender equality training for teachers and personnel in education-related field;

(f) Promote more women to study in professional education, especially in technical fields;

(g) Draft the gender equality curriculum for higher education.

18. As for the control of monitoring of gender violence in the media, Thailand has enacted a number of laws, such as the National Films and Videos Commission Announcement on the regulations to consider videos and advertisements B.E. 2551 (2008) and the Broadcasting and Television Business Act, B.E. 2551 (2008), which include provisions to prohibit the presentation of contents that may violate peace,

order, national security or people's good morality, which include pornography and gender violence.

19. The National Broadcasting and Telecommunication Commission Announcement on the regulations for making radio and television programs B.E. 2556 has prohibited the presentation of:

(a) Inappropriate behaviours, including behaviours that may induce violence;

(b) Any violent acts;

(c) The uses of arms, drugs as well as unlawful and immoral acts;

(d) Presentation that may induce or promote discrimination, violation of rights and human dignity of any groups of people.

20. Regarding the Gender Equality Curriculum, the Ministry of Education is working closely with the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security to develop the content of gender equality in the social study subject, as well as integrate this issue into some other subjects. We are revising the text book. And in the first step, we plan to train our teachers to be gender sensitive. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education has developed a handbook on "Connect with Respect": Preventing Gender-based Violence in School Programme for Students in Early Secondary School, in collaboration with UNESCO and UNICEF, aiming to promote gender equality in school. This handbook was translated into Thai. The Ministry of Education has used this Handbook to train our teachers to apply the Handbook in selected schools as a pilot phrase with a hope that gender sensitivity will be instil to the students. We plan to expand the use of Handbook to some other schools in the future.

Question 6

21. With regard to child and forced marriage, Section 1448 of the Civil and Commercial Code stipulates that a marriage can take place only when the man and woman have completed their seventeenth year of age unless in case of having appropriate reason the Court may allow them to marry before attaining such age. We are working on amending the said Section to increase the marriageable age to eighteenth year of age.

22. Additionally, Thailand took note of the Committee's concern that a man who has sexual relations with a girl over the age of 13 but under the age of 15, with her consent or that of her parents, could marry her without being prosecuted. The proposal to amend the Section 277 of the Criminal Code, to remove the court's discretion to permit marriage between a girl aged 13-15 who has been violated sexually to marry her offender regardless of his age, is currently under review by the Ministry of Justice and will later be submitted to the Cabinet for approval.

Question 7

23. The Protection of Victims of Domestic Violence B.E. 2550 has stipulated the mechanism to protect well-being of family members, namely the Center to Prevent Domestic Violence in each province and in Bangkok. The centre has mandates to protect women, children and anyone within the family from acts of violence. It works with the multidisciplinary team and related units, such as police, hospitals and children and family sheltering home to treat and monitor both people who are victims and perpetrators of domestic violence.

24. The aim of the law is that family members are protected, whereas the perpetrators have been treated and thus would never commit the act of violence again.

25. In the year 2013, the following statistics were reported: There are 1,123 victims of domestic violence, of which:

(a) 90.12 per cent (1,012 persons) are women;

(b) 76.58 per cent (860 cases) are victims of physical violence;

(c) 77.56 per cent (871 cases) received treatment according the act and never fell victim to domestic violence again;

(d) 1.51 per cent (17 cases) are still victims to repeated violence;

(e) 20.93 per cent (235 cases) are in the monitoring process.

26. The statistics up to the year 2016 are in the verifying and analysing process and are expected to be available in March 2017.

27. The MSDHS Social Assistance Center has reported on the situation and trends on violence against women during January-July 2016 as the following:

(a) 1,037 cases of domestic violence were reported, the top-3 most are women (490 cases), children (461 cases) and elderly (70 cases) respectively;

(b) Most cases have been consulted. 58.4 per cent has been transferred to the provincial centres and Bangkok Metropolitan.

28. In the year 2015, The One-Stop Service Center of the Ministry of Public Health has reported 23,977 cases of women and children who are victims to domestic violence. The number of women who are victims to violence is 3.5 times more than children, whereas the number of children who are victims to sexual violence is 4 times more than women.

29. The report according to article 17 of the Domestic Violence Act revealed that:

(a) 969 cases of DV have been assisted;

(b) Three quarters of the cases are husband and wife;

(c) 72 per cent of the cases are parents and children;

(d) The proportion between women and men victims in 9:1;

(e) In 5 years (2011 -2015), the number of elderly victims is increasing up to 200 per cent;

(f) Most victims are in working age;

(g) Most cases (38 per cent) have been consulted, sent to hospital and legally assisted.

Question 8

30. In April 2016, the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) has issued the NCPO's Order No. 14/2559 to promote a holistic approach to addressing the situation in the Southern Border Provinces and to enhance coordination among the agencies concerns. Under the said Order, the Southern Border Provincial Administration and Development Advisory Committee was established and it will act in place of the Southern Border Provincial Administration and Development Council. (There are no condition on the proportion of women and men) The Committee members are currently being selected. (The council is now repealed)

31. The participation of women in national peace and security mechanism may be seen from the appointment of the sub-committee on human rights of people in the Southern border of Thailand in the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), of which the proportion of men and women is 7:4.

32. Additionally, there are 34 women (28.6 per cent) from the total number of 119 members of 8 sub-committees under the Center of Southern Border Administration.

33. The centre also held activities to promote women in the southern border provinces of Thailand who has dedicated themselves and who are leaders in promotion of people's life quality, enhance people's potentiality and promote sustainable development.

34. Thailand firmly supports the UN's Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda under UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and continues to look for ways to strengthen our commitments. We are currently finalizing a National Guideline on WPS and considering sending more female peacekeepers to participate in UN peace operations. We are also considering enhanced capacity-building programmes to train women in negotiation and communication skills as well as other such skills required for active participation in peace processes at all stages.

Question 9

35. The security and the well-being of the people in the southern border province is a national agenda for the Government. All Government authorities operating in the area attach greatest importance to the safety of all people, particularly women and children. The Royal Thai Police takes seriously any violent incidents that took place in the area and immediately launched an investigation. Relevant agencies also work to ensure that victims and families affected are properly redressed. Compensation is available to provide financial assistance by the Government. The Ministry of Education has also put in place a scheme to offer remedy and compensation specifically to students, education personnel and their families in cases of death. The authorities have also provided security escorts to teachers in affected areas.

Question 10

36. In 2016, the Police uncovered and investigated a total of 333 human trafficking cases originated in the year which represents an increase of 5 per cent from 317 cases in 2015. From 333 cases, 244 are related to sexual exploitation, 43 cases of 75 cases in labour exploitation are involved with workers in fishing sector, while 8 cases are related to forced begging, and the remaining 3 cases are the use of children in pornography production.

37. From 2013 to 2016, a total of 45 government officials have been charged for involvement in trafficking in persons. Between 2013 -2015, 35 out of 45 officials were investigated, prosecuted and convicted for involvement in human trafficking.

Number of Trafficking Victims identified through the Victim Identification Process (2015-2016) (by gender and nationality)

	Gender		*Nationality*											
	Male	*Female*	*Thai*	*Myanmar*	*Laotian*	*Cambodian*	*Vietnamese*	*Filipino*	*Bangladesh*	*Sri Lankan*	*Uzbekistani*	*Rohingya*	*Unknown Nationality*	*Total*
2015	451	531	360	409	87	9	1	–	27	–	–	89	–	982
2016	411	413	333	238	58	52	127	4	–	1	1	–	10	824

		Cases under Investigation						
		Exploitation Type						
Year	Cases	Sex Trafficking	The use of children in Pornography Production	Begging	Labor	Labor in fishing sector	Slavery	Others
2014	280	223	1	16	33	3	1	3
2015	317	245	–	3	30	39	–	–
2016	333	244	3	8	32	43	–	3

38. The Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS) has devised an action plan that aims to eradicate the trafficking of women and children and focuses on 11 preventative measures. The MSDHS has also set up a Center to Solve Human Trafficking Problems for Women and Children and regularly holds training programs for capacity-building for officers that deal with trafficking in women and children along with seminars for the media to raise awareness on these issues. In addition, the MSDHS has posted several signs campaigning against sex tourism in Thailand at airports and major tourist destinations. In 2016, it held a seminar to raise awareness on human trafficking issues with over 200 participants from tourism-related sectors. The Ministry of Interior (MOI) continues to increase its efforts in protecting women and children against abuse through regular inspections of karaoke bars, entertainment venues, and business establishments that serve alcohol because they tend to be areas at risk for sexual exploitation. In 2016, the MOI arrested and prosecuted 238 cases and closed down 238 establishments that were in violation.

39. The Cabinet extended the duration of stay for victims and witnesses of trafficking twice in the year 2016. Initially, victims and witnesses would be promptly repatriated after their cases reached verdicts. In 2011, they were granted permission to stay and work in Thailand for 6 months. This was extended to one year after their cases have ended by the Cabinet approval on 15 March 2016. However, after a careful consideration and as part of our overall efforts to provide these victims and witnesses a new beginning in their lives, the Cabinet then decided, on 13 December 2016, to further extend the duration of stay for migrants who are victims and witnesses for human trafficking cases from 1 year to 2 years. Moreover, the government increases incentives for victims to cooperate with law enforcement in the investigation and prosecution of trafficking cases, including by — providing foreign trafficking victims legal alternatives to deportation to countries in which they would face retribution or hardship and providing witness protection services.

40. *[In 2016, a total of 61 NGOs registered with the Government to work in several areas which helped contribute to the fight against human trafficking. In terms of legal assistance and assistance related to prosecution, NGOs such as Social Responsibility Law Office (SR Law), and Human Rights and Development Foundation (HRDF) have provided support. Furthermore, continued cooperation with Save the Children to develop the "Child Witness Protection Programme" in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child has helped prepare child witnesses for trial.]*

Question 11

Cases under investigation, 2014-2016

		Exploitation Type						
Year	*Cases*	*Sex Trafficking*	*The use of Children in Pornography Production*	*Begging*	*Labor*	*Labor in fishing sector*	*Slavery*	*Others*
2014	280	223	1	16	33	3	1	3
2015	317	245	–	3	30	39	–	–
2016	333	244	3	8	32	43	–	3

41. The OWAFD has the projects to promote new life (in 104 days) for women and girls who wish to leave prostitution by promoting job training, securing income for taking care of themselves and their family, promoting strength of family institution. It also promotes women and girls to form professional groups in order to ensure market share and job's sustainability.

Question 12

42. Work has been undertaken to improve knowledge, understanding and skills of women on the constitution and relevant laws and has raised public awareness on the importance of women's participation in politics and administrative functions. Training and workshops were organized for women on local government administration to prepare women candidates before elections. Discussion forum were held to build up networks and budgetary support has been given to activities at the local level to build capacities of women and campaign for greater participation of women in local politics. There were visits and discussions held with party leaders to sensitise them on the issue. Office of the Civil Service Commission also holds regular training and networking sessions for women executive.

43. Awareness raising campaigns on the importance of women's participation in politics were conducted by Regional Public Relations Offices. Public assemblies were held in 8 provinces and broadcasted on television and radio. There were radio and television programmes and discussions on women and politics. Trainings were organized for local media to raise awareness on women and politics at the community level. Campaigning activities were also conducted in 7 leading educational institutions to encourage young generations to promote participation of women in politics.

44. Recognizing the need to promote political participation of women of all walks of life, in 2011-2014, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security together with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) launched a Leadership Academy for Muslim Women. The Academy Programme exercised in 14 provinces in the South has equipped participants with skills to participate and take leading roles in community development activities. Upon completion, participants was assigned to work in political entities in their respective areas on internship basis and, where possible, mentored by Muslim women who are already in political positions.

Question 13

45. All children who are born in Thailand are entitled to birth registration, regardless of their nationality. This is in line with Article 7 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In compliance with Article 7 of the Convention on the Right of

the Child (CRC), all children who are born in Thailand are entitled to birth registration and other rights under the Article. We also continue to consider, where appropriate, further amendment of the Civil Registration Act of 2008 and the Nationality Act of 2008, as well as provide even greater access to birth registration and individual documentation services, including late birth registration, to build on our progress in reducing vulnerability to statelessness. Birth registration databases in 794 hospitals are linked with the national database of the Ministry of Interior.

Question 14

46. The Thai Cabinet approved, in December 2016, a resolution on Guidance and measures to address Legal Status Problems and Problems of Stateless Persons in Thailand, of which some 80,000 stateless children and young adults could benefit and be eligible to apply for Thai nationality. The resolution earned praise from UNHCR's Representative in Thailand for demonstrating the Government's strong political will to reduce statelessness among children. Furthermore, Thailand has endorsed UNHCR's #IBelong Campaign to End Statelessness by 2024 and its goal of achieving zero statelessness.

Question 15

47. In July 2016, the Prevention and Solution of Adolescent Pregnancy Problem Act B.E. 2559 (2016) was passed. The Act stipulates that young people aged 10 to 19 must be given access to reproductive health information and services. Schools must offer comprehensive sexuality education, provide consultations on pregnancy prevention and allow teenage mothers to continue their studies at school until graduation.

48. The Ministry of Education has incorporated content on gender and reproductive health, such as physical changes, effects of premature sex and unwanted pregnancy as well as sexually transmitted diseases for children in primary and high-school levels. Also, document and media have been developed to promote gender and sex education.

49. The Basic Education Core Curriculum has prescribed health and physical education as one of the eight learning areas. The learning area for health and physical education includes, among others, Life and Family under which students will learn about self-values and families' values; self-adjustment to physical, mental, emotional, sexual changes; creating and maintaining relationships with others; sexual health practices; and life skills. Gender and reproductive health will be taught in an age-appropriate manner; for example, human growth and self-care (5th grade), physical, mental, emotional, sexual changes (7th grade), factors influencing attitudes about sexual matters (8th grade), problems and effects of having sexual intercourse at school age (8th grade), sexually transmitted diseases (8th grade), and reproductive health (9th grade).

50. Girls and boys can choose to study in the fields of their interest without discrimination. The number of women in the Engineering field has increased every year. In the year 2016, 31.84 per cent of Engineering students are women, a slight increase from 27.83 per cent in the year 2014.

Question 16

51. The Home Workers Protection Act extends labour protection to homeworkers and is applicable to a person or a group or persons, both women and men, who agrees with an employer to undertake work that the employer in an industrial business has assigned for production or assembly outside the business establishment of the employer, or other work as set out in regulations. Women working as contract

employees are covered under the Labour Protection Act which stresses that contract employees should receive the same benefits and welfare as those who work under a direct employment contract without discrimination. The Social Security Act and the Workmen's Compensation Act are not applicable to an employee who is employed for domestic work which does not involve in business.

52. The Home Workers Protection Act, the Labour Protection Act, the Workmen's Compensation Act and the Social Security Act do not contain any clause which allows differential treatment based on nationality, statelessness or migration status. In principle, these laws provide equal protection to everyone and do not discriminate. Migrant workers who come to work in Thailand holding a passport and a work permit are fully covered by the Workmen's Compensation Act on an equal footing with Thai nationals and without any discrimination. Furthermore, Thailand is in the process of adopting the ILO Convention No. 111 on Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) which aims at promoting equality of opportunity and treatment in respect of employment and occupation, with a view to eliminating any discrimination in respect thereof.

Question 17

53. Thailand has committed itself to ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030 which the Cabinet and National AIDS Committee (NAC) approved the National AIDS Strategic Plan (NASP) for 2014-2016. The NSP was launched to tackle various targets such as reduce HIV infections by two-thirds, universal access to social protection and quality care and treatment for People living with HIV/AID, and human rights and gender specific needs were addressed in all HIV responses. In addition, the Operational Plan for Ending AIDS in Thailand for 2015-2019 was approved in 2014. The plan has identified 30 high burden provinces (including Bangkok) and utilizes the preventive effects of ART in reducing HIV infections with the focus on effective package of service to key populations. Last year, Thailand was commended by WHO for our efforts to protect children, particularly on our success in the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis (less than 2 per cent), becoming the first country in Asia and the Pacific region and the world's second after Cuba.

54. Article 305 of Thai Criminal Code states that abortion is illegal except in cases when it is committed by a medical practitioner and is considered only as necessary if the same endangers the health of the mother or when the pregnancy is due to sexual offenses such as rape and incest.

55. The Medical Council of Thailand also has a guideline on the therapeutic termination of pregnancy in accordance with Section 305 of the Criminal Code which states that the termination of pregnancy shall be performed (1) in case of necessity due to the physical health problem of the pregnant woman; (2) in case of necessity due to the mental health problem of the pregnant woman, which has to be certified or approved by at least one medical practitioner other than the one who will perform the medical termination of pregnancy. *[In the case of severe stress due to the finding that the fetus has, or has a high risk of having, severe disability, or has or has a high risk of having severe genetic disease, after the said woman has been examined and received genetic counseling and the aforementioned matters have been acknowledged in writing by at least one medical practitioner other than the one who will perform the medical termination of pregnancy, the said pregnant woman shall be regarded as having mental health problem according to (2).]*

56. One of the affordable and modern methods of contraception is condom. It is the best and easiest way to prevent unwanted pregnancy and venereal diseases for their children. In order to promote the use of condoms, the Ministry of Public

Health has introduced the National Condom Strategy (2015-2019). The Strategy has five objectives: (1) raising awareness on the use of condoms and ensure greater acceptance among parents of the possibility of their children using condoms; (2) providing easier access for people to buy condoms and lubricant; (3) improving and controlling the quality of condoms; (4) building an environment that persuades individuals to use condoms; and (5) promoting study and evaluation of activities about condom use. The Department of Disease Control (DDC) has been distributing free condoms through various locations including local health service providers and hospitals.

57. On January 17, 2017, the cabinet has approved the National Strategies to End HIV/AIDS Problems (B.E. 2560 -2573), of which the 4th strategy focuses on gender, stipulating that there should be measures to promote understanding and strength at all levels in order to reduce gender discrimination in HIV/AIDS treatments and rights protection.

58. The evaluation of the 1st National Reproductive Health Policy and Strategic Plan (B.E. 2553-2557) has revealed that the policy implementation was still ineffective because there was no main responsible unit, while the stakeholders had no understanding and lack coordination. Also reproductive health problems are complex, while there are limiting number of personnel and incomplete database for making efficient decision. However, the plan has made the following good progress:

(a) It leads to the development of the 2nd National Reproductive Health Policy and Strategic Plan that has clearer directions, aims and responsible units;

(b) It has created teams, networks and development of reproductive health databases;

(c) People receive information and have more access to reproductive health services.

Question 18

59. Recognising the potential and increasing role of women in the workforce and the economy, the Royal Thai Government has strengthened relevant legislation to promote equal economic rights and opportunities. The Thai Women Empowerment Fund was established in 2012 to enhance women's opportunity in workforce and economy. The Fund's 4 main objectives are (1) to provide low/zero interest fund and loans for investment; (2) to empower women and their networks to throughout the country to solve related problems faced by women and provide remedy; (3) to enhance, support and implement activities to develop the role and leadership skills to strengthen women socially and economically; and (4) to support related projects. The Fund is managed the Thai Women Empowerment Fund Committees at the national, provincial and local levels. A sum of annual fund of approximately 2,800,000 USD is allocated to all Provincial Committees to provide loans to members or related organizations.

60. The Department of Women's Affairs and Family Development, the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, and the Sustainable Development Foundation integrated gender issues into the Disaster Management Field Manual: Gender Perspectives. Main objectives of this Manual are (1) to integrate gender issues in disaster risk reduction projects, and (2) to encourage capacity-building to promote gender equality in all process of disaster management among related government agencies and non-governmental organizations. Additionally, the Government has encouraged women's role and participation in the protection and promotion of a sustainable environment. An important strategy is to mainstream gender perspectives in the national policy and planning process to ensure gender

perspectives are reflected in development policy and planning process. The Environment Research and Training Centre, Department of Environmental Quality Promotion, has organized trainings to promote women's capacity in environmental protection.

Question 19

61. The elimination of discrimination against women with disability, elderly women, marginalized women and LGBTI has been stipulated under the Gender Equality Act B.E. 2558. People who faced discrimination may file petition to the committee under the Act.

62. The MSDHS has also enacted the Promotion of Life Quality of People with Disability Act B.E. 2550 and Elderly Act B.E.2546 to promote protection and life quality of people with disability and elderly people in Thailand, both women and men equally.

63. As for the prevention of social stigma, the Domestic Violence Act has prohibited the publication of information as well as pictures of victims of violence.

Question 20

64. As a part of our efforts to protect the planet from degradation, Thailand has put in place a number of laws and policies on forestry and environmental protection. Nonetheless, we remain committed to the obligations to respect the rights of our people and local communities, women and men alike, to a fair share of the benefits in the utilization of the lands and natural resources.

65. The Government continues to ensure relevant laws and measures are implemented through a fair and transparent process. Projects to grant land use permits to allow local communities to collectively utilize, and help reserve forest land under the idea of "community living in harmony with the forest" have also been expedited and implemented in several provinces of the country.

Question 21

66. The Criminal Code and the Civil and Commercial Code, both of which contain provisions related to marriage and divorce, apply equally to everyone. The government has taken steps to amend a number of sections under the two Acts to ensure that both men and women enjoy equal right during betrothal and to divorce.

67. The government also recognizes that there are some customary laws among certain ethnic minority groups. Thus, priority has been given to improving access to education and employment of women belonging to ethnic minority groups in order to strengthen independence and self-reliance. The Paralegal Training for Rural Women Project has been carried out in all 17 provinces of the Northern region to empower the trainees with legal knowledge.

68. As for the access to justice, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Justice have the provincial centre and to receive petitions and provide legal advice on cases and financial support for people who wish to process their cases.